The Sketch

No. 2598—Vol. CC. WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 1944 ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

Postage: Inland 2d. Canada & Newfoundland 1d. Foreign 1½d.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH COMES OF AGE.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH *will be eighteen years old on Friday next, April 21, and while not of age in the full legal sense she becomes, under the amended Regency Act of last year, a potential Counsellor of State. Her Royal Highness will now take a much larger part in public life; a number of official tours have been arranged. Visiting South Wales with the King and Queen last month, she received from the Principality the charming unofficial title of "Ein Tywysoges"—"Our Princess."*

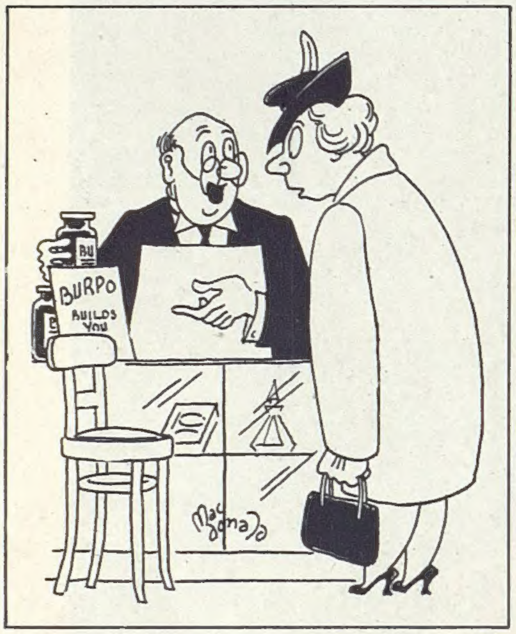
A

PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON.

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP

Mapcraft. I thought my geography was coming along nicely, but it is always getting jolts and set-backs. No sooner had I mastered the latitude and longitude of Omsk and Tomsk, and grasped the strategic significance of Minsk and Pinsk, than I found it all wasted. Now I have to perpend how and why Czernowicz comes to be Cernauti (which seems to me quite unreasonable), and whether the Bug is what any sensible person would take it to be, or is the Buck, the Booch or the Boodje. Well, perhaps it doesn't matter, so long as it is not the Boojum. I shouldn't be surprised if we are soon having to contend with that old friend of yore, Premsyl, and I foresee another old favourite, the Dobruja (pron. Dogsbody), coming into prominence again. All very satisfactory, no doubt, but a trifle confusing for a Basic Englishman, and *very* hard on the B.B.C. announcers, who are said to be suffering from chronic tongue-sprain and marked jaw-weariness.



"It has vitamins and things that the Ministry of Food hasn't even thought of yet!"

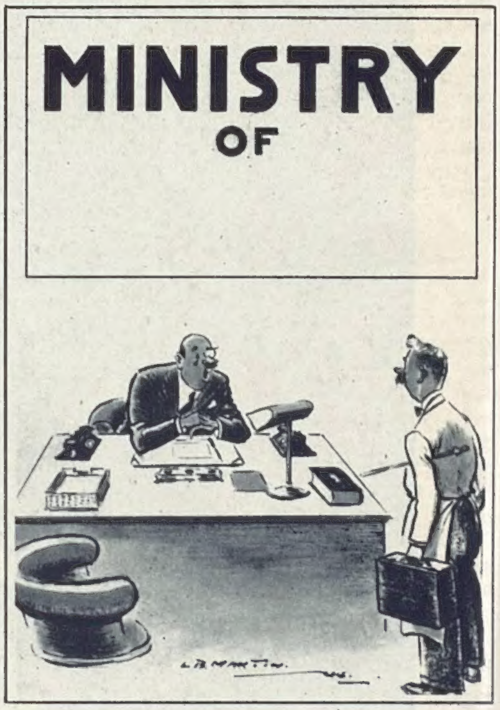
DRAWN BY MACDONALD.

Pulling Ourselves Together.

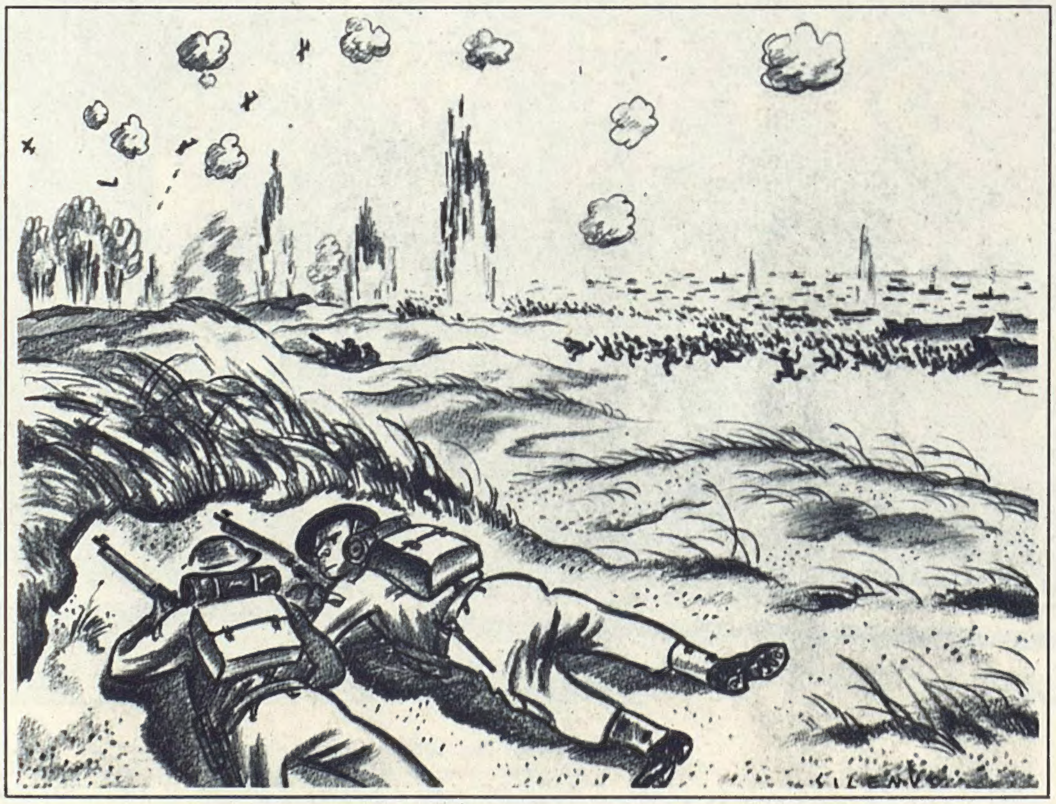
However, geography is only one of the lesser horrors of war; there are plenty of others, and they seem to increase in number and variety. The latest is one which affects all males intimately, though I dare say we cannot expect much sympathy for it from the other sex. Mr. Cocks, M.P., has given voice to this grievance in tones which have shaken the country to its foundations. It costs, he says, as much to keep one's trousers up for six weeks as formerly it did for six years; and he wants to know why he has to pay five shillings for a pair of braces worth sixpence. This is no trivial matter; it is just as important for morale that the nation should keep its trousers up as that it should pull its socks up; and it is undoubtedly extremely difficult to do either at present. It is no good saying "use string," because there isn't any string, and what there is has been selfishly filched and hoarded by one's wife. No doubt our American visitors have a simple alternative to "suspenders," but that won't work either, because there aren't any belts, and anyhow, they do not suit all figures.

Full Stretch.

I said just now that we could expect no sympathy in this distress from the loved ones to whom we naturally look for sympathy; but they have their troubles too. If men need elastic for braces, women need it for such a variety of purposes that I could not begin to name them all, even if I were indelicate enough to try. Roughly, it may be said that a woman without elastic lives a blighted life; but where has all the elastic gone to? Into the Black Market, it would seem; enterprising financiers are selling it on trays in the street at a shilling a yard. Whether it has any tensile properties I doubt, and don't intend to ascertain. Synthetic elastic is highly necessary to keep the nation at full stretch, and I am wondering whether there are not some resilient by-products to be extracted from the vast quantities of gum which are now being chewed in our midst.



"They haven't quite decided yet, Richardson, but it might be the 'Ministry of Ministries.'" (DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.)



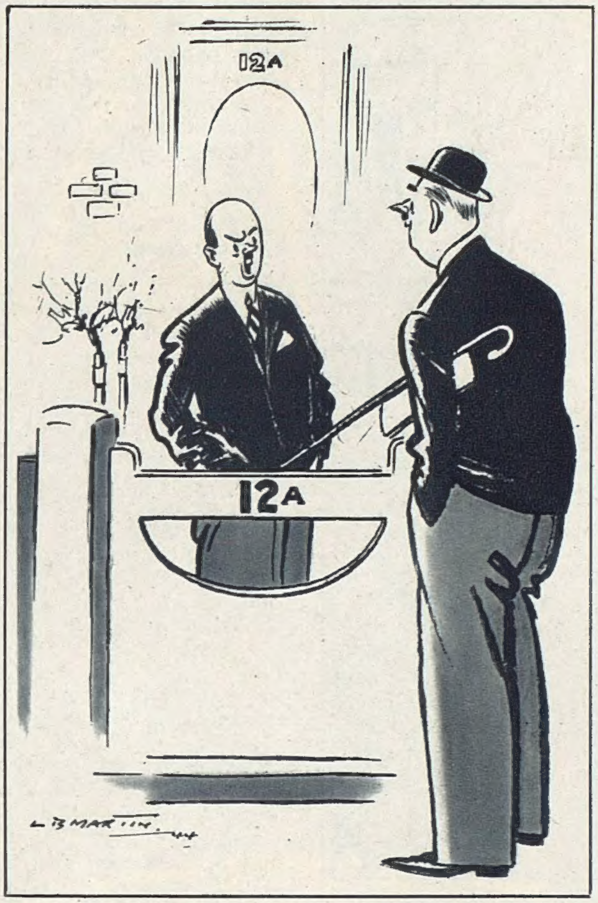
"If it is exactly like the coast of Belgium, d'you think they'd let us know where we're going just like that? I'll bet we're more likely being trained to storm the cliffs of Normandy!"

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

The Cost of Living.

Altogether, the racketeers are having a merry time and are giving us an interesting preview of what will happen if some of our statesmen

have their way and fasten controls on us for ever. Whisky in bond is being bought, it is reported, at prices which will mean £4 10s. per bottle retail. My mathematics won't run to the price per nip—if you can call it a nip ! I see it stated that canary-seed costs a pound a pound, and you must nowadays love your canary very dearly if you wish to keep it on an adequate diet. So far as I know, these fastidious birds firmly decline crusts, cabbage-stalks, and potato-peelings. There is even a racket in signet-rings, a form of jewellery which seems to have an irresistible allure for the G.I. A bolder form of ramp was attempted by two smugglers who were found to be wearing corsets as a covering for sparking-plugs. One does not see any necessary connection between the two articles, but artful dodgers have little sense of the fitness, or even the form-fitness, of things.



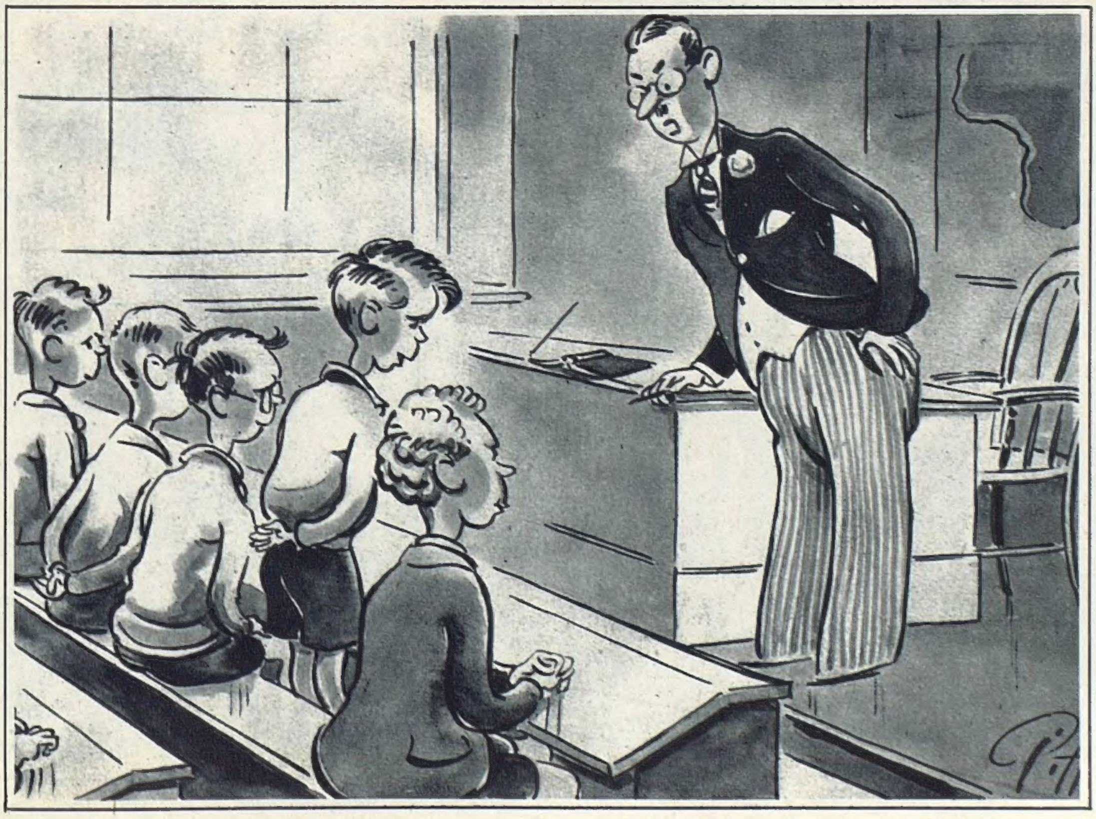
"Well, my confounded tax code-number is 13 !"
DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

The New Archery. Among those gruesome aspects of war, domestic and military, I certainly did not expect to find bows and arrows. But history *does* repeat itself, and there are those who say that the tank is only a new version of the warrior in mail, and the aeroplane is only a return to personal combat, and oil bombs and such-like are only modern variants of old, far-off, forgotten things. I have not yet heard of the troops actually using bows and arrows in the field (though we were thinking of pikes in 1940), but on the Home Front the question has arisen whether, if a young archer catches a friend in the eye with an arrow, the parent is liable in damages for not restraining the martial ardour of his offspring. The legal answer, up to the time of going to press, is no ; and a sigh of relief has been heard to waft from all parents throughout the land. If my late and revered father had been legally and morally responsible for all that I did with my little catapult—well, let us draw a veil !

Lava and Feathers. As if there wasn't enough to keep us occupied, Vesuvius must take a hand. It almost seems as if Vulcan had been saying that he didn't see why Mars should have the whole field to himself. Anyhow, it is not yet considered healthy to walk about Naples without a tin hat, and even that is rather inadequate protection against a ton or so of flying rock. Failing a shrapnel helmet, one is advised to carry an umbrella—it will at least keep the ashes off. It all seems very gratuitous, but it is not half as gratuitous as some of the things which misguided human beings do to brighten the war. Some of them have been sending white feathers to Australian airmen in England, the suggestion being that by bombing Berlin and indulging in other little joy-rides of that kind, they are "dodging" the real war in Sydney and Melbourne. I try to be tolerant to the eccentricities and pettinesses of human nature (having a few myself), but I do find it difficult to understand the minds of such anonymous feather-donors and mud-slingers. The only appropriate thing would be to give them all their feathers back—with a little tar, for external application only.

Sorrows of the A.T.S. Australian bird-men get white feathers—and nubile A.T.S. cannot get white raiment for their Easter weddings ! There's another paradox of war for you ! The bridal gowns were expected from America, but alas ! they had not arrived in time for the Hymeneal outbreak which is always associated with Easter. It is a great pity, because the white robes might have been very useful afterwards in the household as tablecloths, which are rapidly disappearing from human ken. In one way and another life is difficult for the A.T.S. They weathered the make-up crisis, but now there is this question about smoking in public. The fiat has gone forth : in trains (but only on long journeys), in railway-station restaurants and buffets, at sports meetings and outdoor functions ; but not in streets or built-up areas. This seems to permit a ladylike puff or two on a quiet country road, but the point is not quite clear. Total abstinence seems the simplest way through these disciplinary complications.

The Well of English Undefiled. I have dwelt enough on new horrors of war, and I wish I could turn by way of contrast to the delights of peace ; but I am afraid I can see some horrors looming up there too. However, let us count our blessings and dwell upon one menace which we seem likely to be spared. The United Nations are unresponsive to the charms of Basic English. A learned Norwegian professor makes the point that the weakness in the scheme is that if the intelligent foreigner learns Basic English, he will then have to unlearn it in order to learn English. Mr. Shaw advises us to concentrate on more important matters and get on with Basic Spelling. By writing "thru" instead of "through" we will save millions of hours and millions of pounds. I suggest that a far


"Come along, now, Wilmot. Surely you know how to spell a simple English word like 'flak' !" (DRAWN BY PITTS.)

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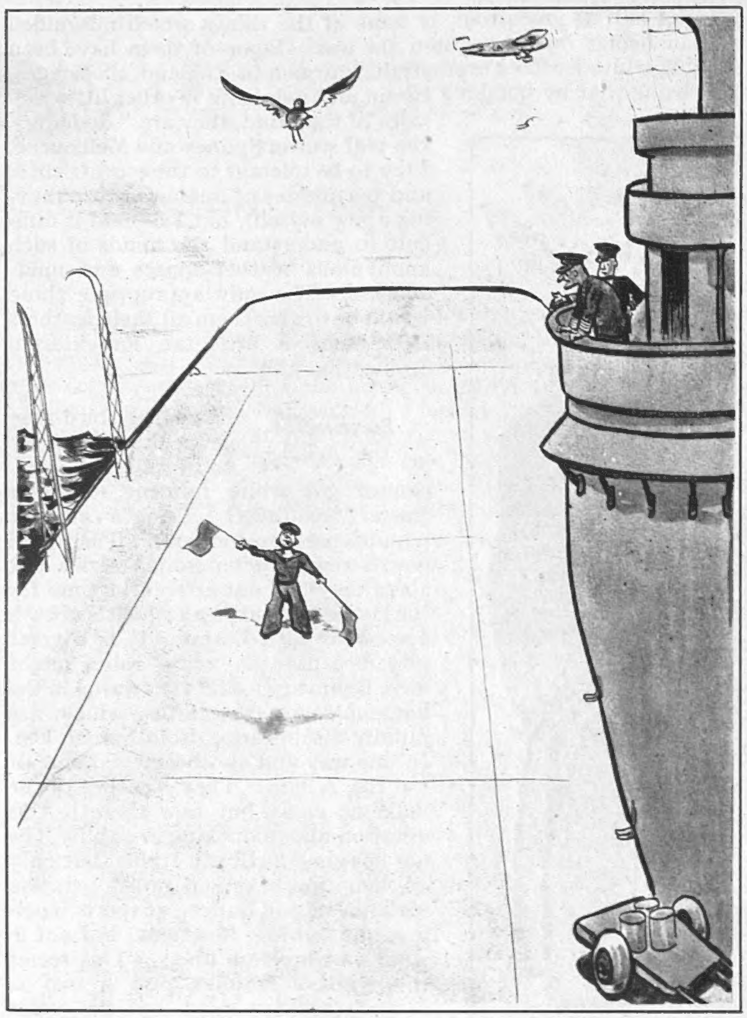


"You see what I mean, Sir . . . his eyesight 's none too good!"

DRAWN BY TERNENT.

Continued.]

greater saving would be made by ceasing to cross t's and dot i's; I tremble to think what those two letters alone have cost Mr. Shaw in man-hours. And he actually wants to complicate things by adding another twenty-six letters to our "Phoenician" alphabet! Some people are never satisfied.

Otium Cum.

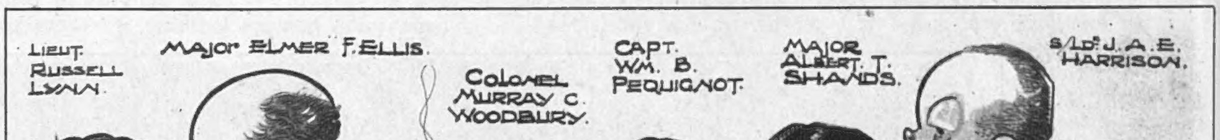
One compensation of peace to which I *was* looking forward was a summer afternoon, a deck-chair, a state of semi-consciousness, green sward, and some flannelled fools at the wicket. A writer in the *Daily Telegraph* brings me down to earth by saying that this will not brighten peace at all. In fact, he says that people simply won't pay to look at it, if they can see muddied oafs at the goals or streaking dogs on the tracks. Ah, this restless age! I must confess I gasp when I see that between 1900 and 1938 tennis clubs in this country increased from 320 to 3400, golf clubs from 120 to 1900, and baseball teams from 10 to 750. Well, of course, if people *will* go hopping about all over the place instead of sitting in a dignified manner and ejaculating at intervals "Well hit, Sir!" or "Well stopped, Sir!"—if they *will* go on like that, or rush about in cars or on bicycles, I suppose it is their own funeral, and pretty soon, too! Certainly cricket cannot, and I hope will not, compete with these feverish, demoralising forms of nervous agitation; and a few diehards among us, I trust, will still be content to see it in all its leisurely, imperturbable dignity. There is no better way of making time stand still, and that is a thing which time doesn't do often enough nowadays.

A Crick in the Neck.

If Sir Malcolm Campbell, and others like-minded with him, have their way, we shall have to face a new rule of the road as one of the joys—or horrors—of peace. I must reluctantly admit that there is very little to be said, on purely rational grounds, for being an exception to an almost universal rule—we have all got to be so internationally-minded nowadays. I suppose somebody has worked out the probable cost of the alteration, and it must be staggering; but what, after all, is another drop in the ocean of "planning"? Let me not be obstinately traditional—though I am traditional enough to think that tradition is not a bad reason for a good many institutions. What I do fear is a slaughter among pedestrians, who would have to school themselves in a whole new set of reactions. It is difficult enough to look in the wrong direction in a one-way street, and a whole public looking permanently in the wrong direction would, I fear, suffer heavily in life and limb. Perhaps, however, that is of little consequence compared to a nice new plan.

Do Unto Others.

The habit, on which I have commented before, of leaving one's money to the butcher, baker and candlestick-maker—rather than to a lot of relatives whom one probably dislikes—seems to be increasing in popularity. One testator was so pleased with the way his barber shaved and sheared that he left a nice little legacy to "my faithful Figaro." Unfortunately, Figaro in this case is Italian and not Spanish, and he is not in Seville but "somewhere in Italy." But it was a pleasing gesture to a profession not, perhaps, sufficiently honoured. Another testator has left £100 to a fishmonger who for forty years supplied tempting sea-food to her invalid husband. If any fishmonger will offer to supply me with some really tasty wares, I here and now promise him my little all. I am open to offers even from the Black Market.



We salute the H.Q. of an OPERATIONAL AIR FORCE WING, *which includes a few well-known men on the very active list of the combined forces of R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F.* (CARICATURES BY FRED MAY.)

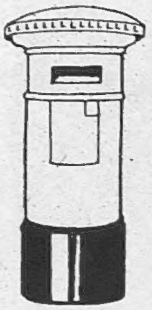
The eighty-seventh of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

"STOP ME IF YOU CAN'T HEAR THIS ONE!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—Doctor Rival, much to everybody's disappointment, is one of our friends, and he sometimes drops in here on his way home of an evening. A few nights ago he was sitting by our fire while he and Charles were engaged upon one of those sardonic, disillusioned conversations which doctors are so fond of.

"I think," said Charles, measuring a meagre dose of whisky into his glass, as though it were cough mixture, "it is time we had a 'Salute the Doctor' week."

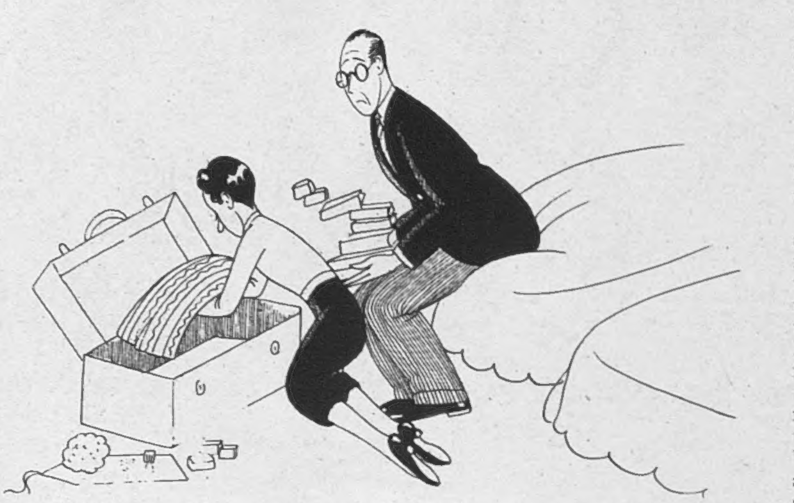
"I couldn't agree with you more, Charles," said Doctor Rival "I have felt for some time that the country ought to show us some mark of its esteem and gratitude."

"Instead of which," said Charles, "they are going to take our practices away from us, and keep us so busy filling in forms we shan't have time to look after the sick."

"I am seriously thinking of becoming a Quack in the Brave New World," said Doctor Rival dreamily.

"My dear Rival," said Charles, "you have taken the very words from my mouth. I shall have my photo. in the local papers with 'Cures Guaranteed' written underneath. What line do you propose to adopt?"

"Herbs," said Doctor Rival simply. "Practically all my cures will be effected through the post, and I shall sit cosily at home writing my memoirs."



"'I feel quite upset about leaving you.'"

"It's a funny thing," said Charles, "but people really prefer Quacks. I don't mean Osteopaths," he added hurriedly, for Lady B. was rising from her chair in wrath, "I mean Quacks. When I was in Australia there was a Chinaman whose treatment for catarrh was to slit open a mouse and clamp it across the Patient's nose, and keep it there for a week. Of course, the climate was sub-tropical, and when he took it off——"

"Please, Charles," said Lady B.

"It was full of maggots," said Charles, refusing to be deterred from telling his horrid story. "And the Chinaman used to tell the Patient that——"

"Charles, Lady B. is quite pale."

"Of course, the Patient was invariably cured," said Doctor Rival, standing up.

"Of course," said Charles. "I sometimes wonder why we waste all those years in hospital."

"A lovely talk."

"That's the first time I've heard Charles grumble since the War started," said Lady B., while he was opening the front door for Doctor Rival.

"It's the whisky," I said. "He does like a drink at seven and it's running short. But he is tired. I'm trying to keep him in bed for a week-end."

"What's the good of keeping me in bed for a week-end?" said Charles crossly, as he came back into the room. "If people know I'm there they'll come and drag me out in my pyjamas. Don't be a fool, Henrietta."

"And that's the first time I've ever heard you speak crossly to Henrietta. You *do* need a holiday," said Lady B. "Come and stay the week-end with me. You can say you are going away and nobody need know where you really are. Henrietta can come too, and I'll give you your breakfasts in bed."

"I think I'd better stay at home and keep people at bay," I said. "And, honestly, Lady B., darling, I wouldn't really enjoy myself lying in bed and listening to you rushing up and downstairs with trays."

And so it was arranged. At first we were pleased and excited about it, but by Friday the impending parting was hanging over us like the Sword of Damocles. I packed Charles' last pair of silk pyjamas and stowed away some neat little parcels of rations. Charles came staggering upstairs under a load of books and tobacco, as though he were about to be marooned on a desert island.

"You know, Henrietta," he said, sitting down on the edge of his bed and letting the books and tobacco cascade to the floor, "I feel quite upset about leaving you. Are you sure you'll be all right?"

"Of course I shall. I'll give Evensong the week-end off and have cosy little women's meals on trays."

"And you'll remember about the clinker in the boiler?"

"I'll remember. Good-bye, Charles; you won't forget me, will you?"

Charles kissed me fiercely, picked up his suitcase, and left the house.

At about eleven o'clock Lady B. rang up to say she'd been sitting on Charles' bed and they'd had a lovely talk.

"Did you talk about me?" I said suspiciously.

"We just touched on you," said Lady B. "I've given him some hot milk now, and tucked him up for the night."

The house seemed very quiet and I tiptoed up to bed. The nicest thing about that night was that the telephone rang twice and each time I was able to say, "I'm sorry, but the Doctor is away," quite firmly.

The next morning Lady B. rang up to say Charles had woken up for early-morning tea and a biscuit, but had dropped off again directly afterwards, and she was going to let him bide. At noon she rang up to say he was still sleeping.

"He isn't dead, is he?" I said anxiously.

"Oh, no, Henrietta. He's asleep, and looking so nice."

"Do you like his pyjamas?"

"They're lovely."

"You didn't notice the patch, did you? It's on the seat."

"Well, no. But I'll have a look when he goes to the bath."

The week-end dragged slowly on. Lady B. reported at regular intervals. Charles spent the whole of Saturday sleeping, and came down to dinner in his dressing-gown. On Sunday he sat reading in a chair all day. "He's very quiet," said Lady B. "You don't think he's fretting, do you, Henrietta?"

"No, no. Being silent is Charles' way of enjoying himself."

On Monday I was digging in the garden and looked up and saw an anxious face looking over the wall.

"Charles!" I said.

"I just wanted to ask about the boiler," said Charles in a hoarse whisper.

"Well, as a matter of fact, it's out."

Charles gave a strangled cry. "Oh, Henrietta! How could you?"

"It just went out, Charles. Are you enjoying yourself? You look terribly well."

"It's heaven!"

"Charles!" cried a voice from the road. "Thank goodness you're back! My wife has got the most awful cough. I hardly got a wink of sleep all night. When can you come and see her?"

"I'll come now," said Charles sadly.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA.

"'Charles!' I said."

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

THE PRINCESSES ELISABETH *and* MARIE-ADELAIDE *of Luxembourg—for taking a practical training towards the day of their country's liberation.*

MAJOR JAMES STEWART—*for varying his starry tactics. He alarms the Germans from the air now as a change from charming them on the screen.*

TWO daughters of the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, PRINCESS ELISABETH and PRINCESS MARIE-ADELAIDE, are busy training with other Belgian women as relief workers at a camp in this country for the day when their country is freed from the Huns' stranglehold. Their work includes pitching tents, nursing, stretcher-carrying, rescue work and cooking over camp fires. Luxembourg was invaded and overrun in May 1940.

SUCCESSOR to Mr. Montagu Norman, LORD CATTO OF CAIRNCATTO is the new Governor of the Bank of England. After his appointment, which will be ratified at the Bank's next meeting, Lord Catto couldn't have chosen a more suitable trophy for décor than the rhino he shot in Nepal. (To the uninstructed, if any: "rhino" is slang for money.)

LIKE other Hollywood film-stars, JAMES STEWART is over here busy helping to harry the skies of Germany in the pre-invasion "softening-up" process now in progress over that country. Newly promoted from Squadron Commander, U.S.A.A.F., to Operations Officer of a Liberator Bomber Group in England, he now directs the "ops" of forty-eight 'planes. Jimmy Stewart has flown at the head of his squadron of twelve 'planes in eleven raids.

TWENTY-TWO-YEAR-OLD LIEUT. STEWART W. L. CAMPBELL, R.N., of Westcliff, with another naval officer, travelled in North Germany in his British uniform for three days after escaping from a P.O.W. camp. After their getaway, they walked all through the night till their feet were raw and swollen. The main difficulty—having no "food marks"—was to get food, and they had nowhere to sleep o' nights. A convincing "hard luck" story got round a sympathetic café waitress once; and they pretended to be Dutch when buying railway tickets. They arrived home recently.

LIEUT.-COM. ROY BAKER-FAULKNER, D.S.C., of the Fleet Air Arm, led the recent attack on the 45,000-ton German battleship "Tirpitz." On April 3 Barracuda dive-bomber pilots dropped a welter of bombs on the ship as she lay in Alten Fiord, Norway; explosions were so terrific that her stern whipped round in the water, and mast-high flames and a 3000-ft. smoke pillar bore witness to the fact that the "Tirpitz" had had her K.O.—perhaps for the rest of the war.

LORD CATTO, *new Governor of the Bank of England—for being snapped with the rhino on his appointment.*

LIEUT. S. W. L. CAMPBELL—*for brazenly touring the Reich in full R.N. uniform after his escape from a P.O.W. camp.*

LIEUT.-COM. R. BAKER-FAULKNER *(seen with his wife)—for leading the attack on the "Tirpitz" which gave the German warship her K.O.*

STAKERS, *mascot of H.M.S. " Starling," looks elated at his connection with H.M. sloops of the Second Escort Group, which, commanded by Capt. J. F. Walker, C.B., D.S.O., in " Starling," " killed " six U-boats in the N. Atlantic.*

MRS. WINSTON CHURCHILL *handed over to the Aid to Russia Fund this mobile X-Ray unit—a gift from the Norwegian Seamen's Union.* M. KUZNETZOV, *First Secretary, and* M. SWETENKO, *Attaché to the Soviet Embassy, are admiring it.*

LADY DILL, *wife of F.-M. Sir John Dill, recently visited Hollywood in connection with the Red Cross drive, when she addressed Service men at the Hollywood canteen, and delivered greetings from England.*

MRS. A. G. HORWOOD *is the widow of Lieut. Alec G. Horwood, D.C.M., who was awarded a posthumous V.C. for his magnificent bravery in the Burma campaign. Baby* CATHERINE ANNE *never saw her father.*

CAPTAIN QUENTIN ROOSEVELT, *son of Brig.-Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, married* MISS FRANCES WEBB, *of Kansas City, recently in an English church. His bride works for the American Red Cross over here.*

AIR MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR HARRIS, *A.O.C. Bomber Command, is here seen in a moment of relaxation, playing with his little daughter* JACQUELINE, *aged four.*

PICTURED NEWS—FAR-FLUNG

The marriage of MR. DAVID HAVEN BARRAN, *youngest son of Sir John Barran, Bt., of Sawley Hall, Ripon, to* MISS JANE LECHMERE MACASKIE, *second daughter of Mr. N. L. Macaskie, K.C., and Mrs. Macaskie, took place at the Chapel of the Assumption, Kensington Square.*

MISS AUDREY HARPER, *after two months' training, is a competent bargee, and helps to man a barge carrying essential cargoes on canals. Note the painted can—a traditional feature of barge "furnishings."*

LADY DRUMMOND, *wife of Sir Jack Drummond, who before her marriage was Miss Anne Wilbraham. She was joint-author with him of "The Englishman's Food," an historical study of the English Diet through five centuries.*

LT. FRANCIS X. SHIELDS, *lawn-tennis star, Davis Cup competitor, Wimbledon finalist, is in England as special service officer with a unit of the U.S. Troop Carrier Command. His job covers recreation, entertainment, athletics.*

IR MARSHAL SIR RODERIC HILL, *A.O.C. Air Defence of Great Britain, with his painting, Achtung—Spitfire in Action," at the R.A.F. Art Exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. . The picture was given to Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, who lent it to the show.*

H.E. *the* GOVERNOR-GENERAL, LORD GOWRIE, *invested* GEN. DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, *Allied South-West Pacific C.-in-C., with the insignia of the G.C.B. at a ceremony in Canberra,*

AND HOME PRODUCED.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

"THE SONG OF BERNADETTE" is "a motion picture no human words can describe," according to its producers, who promptly go on to describe it. They say it is "the mightiest emotional impact the screen has ever known," exclamation mark. They say that "in all the years of entertainment-making, there has never been a greater picture," exclamation mark. They also call it "A motion picture so powerful . . . so majestic . . . so deep in its understanding . . . that for one immortal moment you touch the eternal truth . . . the final fulfilment . . . of everything you are . . . or ever hope to be." You get the idea, of course. They think it's Big.

It is big, all right. It runs for two hours and three-quarters. I have forgotten how many thousand dollars it took to produce, but I know, for I have it right down beside me here on a slip of paper, that the studio paid £21,250 for the screen rights of Franz Werfel's book. My slip of paper also informs me that the film took nearly a year to prepare and six months to make; that over a thousand unknown actresses were considered for the part of Bernadette before Jennifer Jones was signed; that "an interesting sidelight is produced by the democratic blending of faiths during the making of the picture," the star being a Catholic, the director a Protestant and the producer a Jew; and that the seats at the charity première ranged in price from—well, that's all over and done with now, but you can take it from me, it was Big Charity.

If you want to know why it is called "The *Song* of Bernadette," although there is no singing at all in the piece beyond a celestial choir, my slip of paper enables me to tell you that too. It seems that in 1940 the famous Czech novelist Franz Werfel was a refugee from the Nazis, hiding in Lourdes. There he came across a couple of dry pamphlets, setting out the story of the peasant girl Bernadette Soubirous, and her miraculous vision of nearly a hundred years ago. Werfel vowed that if he ever reached the haven of a free country he would "put off all other tasks and sing, as best he could, the song of Bernadette." A year later he arrived in America, and kept his promise.

Franz Werfel's book was a fine, glowing work. I cannot think of the film as fine. It is unquestionably sincere. It tells, with a conscious devotion, the story of the child Bernadette, who goes out gathering firewood one winter's day, and sees a beautiful Lady in a grotto; who digs in the earth, at the Lady's direction, and uncovers a spring with strange curative properties; who becomes for four years the storm-centre of political, scientific and religious controversy; and who finally enters a convent at Nevers and dies there of tuberculosis.

All this is told very deliberately and slowly, with some impressive camera-work, and appropriate background music in the inspirational passages. The girl Jennifer Jones, who plays Bernadette, moves through the film in a kind of trance-like fervour. I think you will find her a good choice for that dumbfounded peasant type. She is not beautiful, but her face can reflect beauty. She has no film tricks yet, or if she has, is discreet enough not to show them; her movements have grace, and her manner is not too cute to be convincing. There are thirty-eight other speaking parts in the cast, ending with "Bishop—André Charlot." Many of these are very finely filled, particularly the Dean of Lourdes (Charles Bickford), the Imperial Prosecutor (Vincent Price), the fanatical nun (Gladys Cooper) and the local doctor, a small part quite brilliantly sketched by a stage actor, Lee J. Cobb.

If this conscientious and devoted film fails to persuade European audiences wholly, it is probably because of its pronounced trans-Atlantic mood. The story is the story of Lourdes, 1858: the voice is the voice of America, 1944. Were the words paranoia and psycho-analysis fashionable in 1858? I think not. And it is not exactly helpful to conviction when a conversation between two French peasant girls runs something like this: "Don't be such a fraid-cat." "I'm norra fraid-cat." "Yes, you are, too." I mean, it takes you outa Lourdes, kinda.

Another new starlet turns up in the London cinema this week, in the person of a Miss Gail Russell, who plays the heroine of a ghost story called "THE UNINVITED" (Plaza). It was made in Hollywood, but it is all about a haunted house in Cornwall, and it has been adapted from an English novel called "Uneasy Freehold," by Dorothy Macardle. Like most films based on novels, the translation is not as satisfying as the original. But in this case it would have a hard job to be. Miss—or is it Mrs. ?—Macardle's book was something quite special in ghost stories, and my advice to you is, if you haven't read it already, go straight out and get a copy—if you can.

"Uneasy Freehold" was a restrained and intelligent story of psychic adventure. "The Uninvited" is largely what a Viennese friend of mine describes as "quatch." Rubbish. Bunkum. Hooey. But it is pretty good "quatch," for all that, except for one sequence in a mental home, which seems to me in the poorest possible taste, and altogether lacking in conviction.

The story is about a composer (Ray Milland) and his sister (Ruth Hussey), who buy a haunted house on the Cornish coast. Their first intimation that there is anything wrong with the house comes from the curious behaviour of their dog. The dog absolutely refuses to go upstairs. Then the brother and sister become aware of a strange chill in the big room that has once been an artist's studio on the first floor. The atmosphere of the room fills them with depression. Music played there turns inevitably into a minor key. They hear a woman sobbing in the night. They catch a mysterious perfume of mimosa.

A young girl, Stella (Gail Russell), their landlord's granddaughter, comes to visit them, and it quickly becomes clear that the spiritual forces at work in the house are centred round her. There are two forces—the spirits of two women who used to live there—the artist's wife and the artist's model. One of the two spirits is Stella's mother, and she is gentle and kind. The other is unutterably cold and malignant. The one wants to protect the girl, the other to kill her. Only the combined efforts of the composer, the sister, the good ghost and the village doctor save poor Stella from crashing over the cliff-top on to the rocks below.

Apart from the obvious appeal of the ghostly goings-on, the chief interest of the piece is in this new girl, this Gail Russell. I can positively

THE BEST PLAYS.

Starred by "The Sketch." ******=highest value.***

*** "BLITHE SPIRIT" (*Duchess*). Noel Coward's play. Betty Ann Davies, Cecil Parker, Irene Browne, Beryl Measor.

*** "PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX" (*Duke of York's*). 1880 Brighton comedy. Iris Hoey, Dorothy Hyson, David Horne.

*** "UNCLE HARRY" (*Garrick*). Victorian gas-light murder thriller, with Michael Redgrave, and Beatrix Lehmann.

** "THE DANCING YEARS" (*Adelphi*). Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

** "SOMETHING IN THE AIR" (*Palace*). Musical, with Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

** "ARC DE TRIOMPHE" (*Phœnix*). Ivor Novello's Paris cavalcade—1906-1925—with Mary Ellis, Raymond Lovell, Peter Graves, Elisabeth Welch.

** "PANAMA HATTIE" (*Piccadilly*). Musical comedy, with Bébé Daniels, Richard Hearne, Max Wall, Ivan Brandt, Claude Hulbert.

** "MY SISTER EILEEN" (*Savoy*). American slapstick with Sally Gray, Coral Browne, Max Bacon.

** "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" (*Strand*). Witty, murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

** "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (*Globe*). Rattigan's inter-allied complications without tears. Jane Baxter, Ronald Squire, Hugh McDermott.

** "THE LISBON STORY" (*Hippodrome*). Play with music.

** "SWEETER AND LOWER" (*Ambassadors*). Second edition of "Sweet and Low" revue: Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall.

** "JUNIOR MISS" (*Saville*). Comedy with the accent on youth. Joan White, Peggy Cummins.

** "THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT" (*Aldwych*). Wonderful acting by the Lunts in Robert Sherwood play.

* "A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS" (*Wyndham's*). Light comedy: Joyce Barbour, Robert Beatty.

* "THE DRUID'S REST" (*St. Martin's Theatre*). Emlyn Williams's light comedy, with Gladys Henson, Michael Shepley.

* "AN IDEAL HUSBAND" (*Westminster*). Donat's ideal Wilde revival. Irene Vanbrugh, Martita Hunt, Esme Percy.

* "MEET ME VICTORIA" (*Victoria Palace*). Cockney humour with Lupino Lane.

* "THIS WAS A WOMAN" (*Comedy*). Sonia Dresdel, John Bryning, Nova Pilbeam in effective melodrama.

* SADLER'S WELLS OPERA SEASON (*New*).

* "LOVE FOR LOVE" (*Haymarket*). Congreve comedy with John Gielgud, Yvonne Arnaud, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

* "SIX PAIRS OF SHOES" (*Playhouse*). Harry Roy and band in a cabaret story.

* "TEN LITTLE NIGGERS" (*Cambridge*). Agatha Christie's thriller. Linden Travers, Allan Jeayes, Terence de Marney.

* "THE LOVE RACKET" (*Prince's*). High-speed musical with Arthur Askey and Carol Raye.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre to avoid disappointment.

assert, without consulting my crystal ball, that there is a future in films for Miss Russell. She is a dark-haired girl, with a pleasingly soft voice, and an air of youth that is at once modest and candid. I found her performance altogether delightful.

Paramount's Technicolor musical, "Melody Inn" (Plaza; April 21), gives DOROTHY LAMOUR *full play as an ex-burlesque queen quartered in an Arizona mining-town. Dick Powell and Victor Moore co-star with her.*

Columbia's "The Beautiful Cheat" stars ROSALIND RUSSELL *as an agent "with a dollar sign for a heart." Spending fortunes on a contest to find a lead for the film-play of a best-seller, she gets tripped up by him* (WILLARD PARKER) *and falls back into the arms of her Henry* (BRIAN AHERNE).

Other people about the cast are Donald Crisp, as a retired sea captain, and Cornelia Otis Skinner, as a trained nurse with a kink in her brain and a perfectly horrid power complex. The latter part has been written in purely for melodrama, and Miss Otis Skinner plays it that way.

I thought I knew all there was to know about the old Lonsdale play "ON APPROVAL," but I was wrong. The version at the Leicester Square—produced, directed and adapted for the screen by Clive Brook—comes as a nice surprise. Mr. Brook, while retaining the backgrounds of the 'nineties, has brought the comedy freshly up to date, with a treatment reminiscent of Sacha Guitry and René Clair. His film, which is never afraid to stop the camera for an informal chat with the audience, to play tricks with time and space, is a casual, contemplative affair. That was a rum business, wasn't it, about the 10th Duke of Bristol and the meat-packer's daughter? he seems to say. And his friend Richard Halton and the preposterous Widow Wislack? Do you remember how the four of them went off together for a month in a Scottish castle, before pairing off in marriage? That was the Widow Wislack's idea. She said that husbands should always be taken first on approval. And, by Jove! what a mess they made of it, and how differently it all turned out from the way they 'd planned it. It happened like this . . . and so he meanders on with his sly reminiscences.

ROBERT TAYLOR *plays John Meredith, U.S. orchestra conductor, in "The Song of Russia." The music is chiefly Tschaikovsky's, with some modern Russian composers.*

"On Approval," treated this way, works out as a slight, but elegant, bit of artificial comedy. In fact, it is one of the few comedies with style that have ever come out of a British studio. Style, too, is the keynote of the acting, which rests almost entirely in the hands of a quartet of players—Mr. Brook himself, Googie Withers, Roland Culver and Beatrice Lillie. These four performances seem to me as deft and as delicately inter-related as we have any right to expect from this disjointed business of film acting.

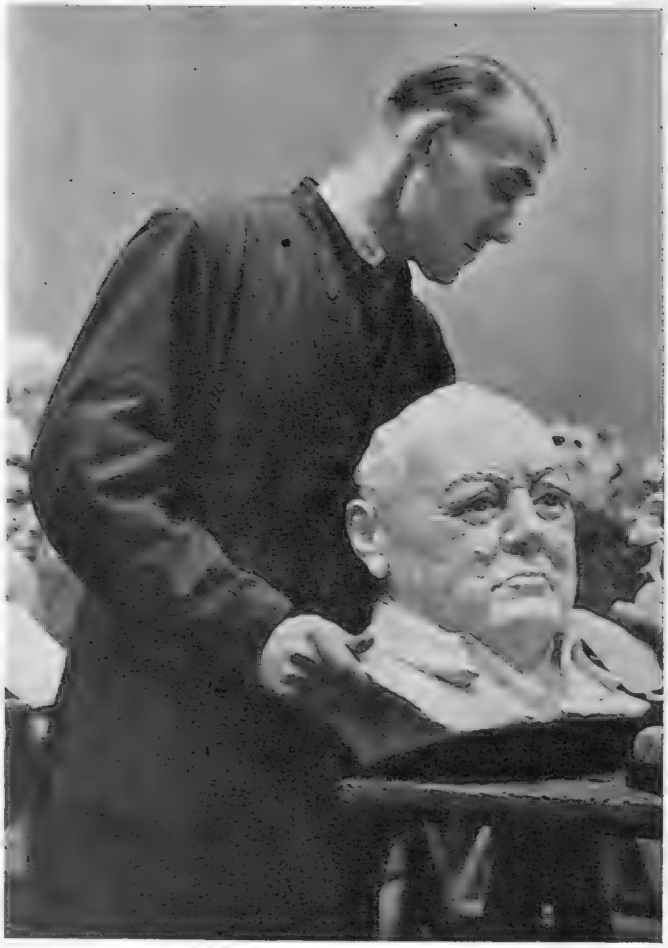
"LE JOUR SE LÈVE" is one of that rare, prized collection of pre-Vichy French films that Studio One has been hoarding up and eking out to its patrons since the war started. Directed by Marcel Carne, and presenting the impressive Jean Gabin, "Le Jour Se Lève" is a minor masterpiece with an odd quality. The frame, in this instance, is more important than the picture.

The film is one of those stories within a story. A murder takes place in a high apartment-house somewhere in a French manufacturing town. We are propelled straight into it. Immediately after the credit titles, a quarrel is heard behind a closed door, a shot is fired, a man staggers out and falls headlong down the long, narrow stairway. The chattering crowds collect, in the street and on every landing. The police arrive. The armed murderer on the top floor barricades himself in. All through the night he waits for his arrest, lighting cigarette stub from cigarette stub, dodging bullets through door and window, doing small domestic jobs as a part of his bewildered ritual.

While he automatically hangs up a new tie or sweeps out an old ashtray, while he paces from bed to wardrobe to window, he recalls the various people whose inter-relations led him to murder. A pretty florists' assistant (Jacqueline Laurent), whom he met at the factory when he worked on a sanding machine. A sadistic dog-trainer (Jules Berry), who loved to tell lies and confuse young and simple people. A hard-bitten vaudeville performer (Arletty), who knew too much for happiness about everybody.

And all the while, as he remembers, the crowd in the street below is growing bigger and bigger. The police send for reinforcements. As dawn breaks, a tear-gas squad climb on to the roof of the apartment-house, and fling a bomb through the broken window. But the workman has shot himself by that time, and not the tear-gas, nor the sun, nor the cheap alarm-clock ringing by the bedside, has power to stir him. The opening and closing sections of "Le Jour Se Lève" have as tense and dramatic an atmosphere as anything I can remember on the screen since "Quai des Brumes" and "Pépé le Moko." This is not the greatest film France has ever produced, but it holds your interest consistently, and is very well worth seeing.

In M.-G.-M.'s "Song of Russia" ROBERT TAYLOR *as Meredith, American orchestra conductor, arrives in Russia for a symphonic tour. Nadya Stepanova* (SUSAN PETERS) *side-tracks him to a village near Smolensk in the Tschaikovsky country, and they marry. Though the Nazis arrive, Meredith insists on finishing his tour; they leave together later to tell America, through music, of Russia's heroism. Director, Gregory Ratoff; producer, Joseph Pasternak.—(Empire.)*



This bust of the Prime Minister came up before the Selection Committee of the R.A.—with what result we do not yet know.

All lined up on trestle tables: portrait busts, animal sculpture and symbolic groups by the score—waiting for the decision of the judges.

The Selection Committee at work: one of the assistants has just passed an entry to the judges for further inspection.

This little lot is just a fraction of the number of paintings which the Selection Committee has to examine.

A HUGE FIELD FOR THE ROYAL ACADEMY—AND THE JUDGES.

WHEN you visit the Royal Academy—as most people do, whether the country is at peace or at war—have you ever considered the Herculean labours of the Selection Committee of distinguished artists who have chosen the pictures for exhibition at Burlington House? These photographs give some idea of the tough task which they have to face, for they give full and careful consideration to every piece of sculpture, every picture and every miniature submitted for admission—and even in wartime the field of entrants is a huge one! This year the R.A. has a new President in Mr. A. J. Munnings, the distinguished painter of horses in English landscapes, and racing scenes. He is sixty-five and has exhibited at the Academy since 1898. He became A.R.A. in 1919 and R.A. in 1925.

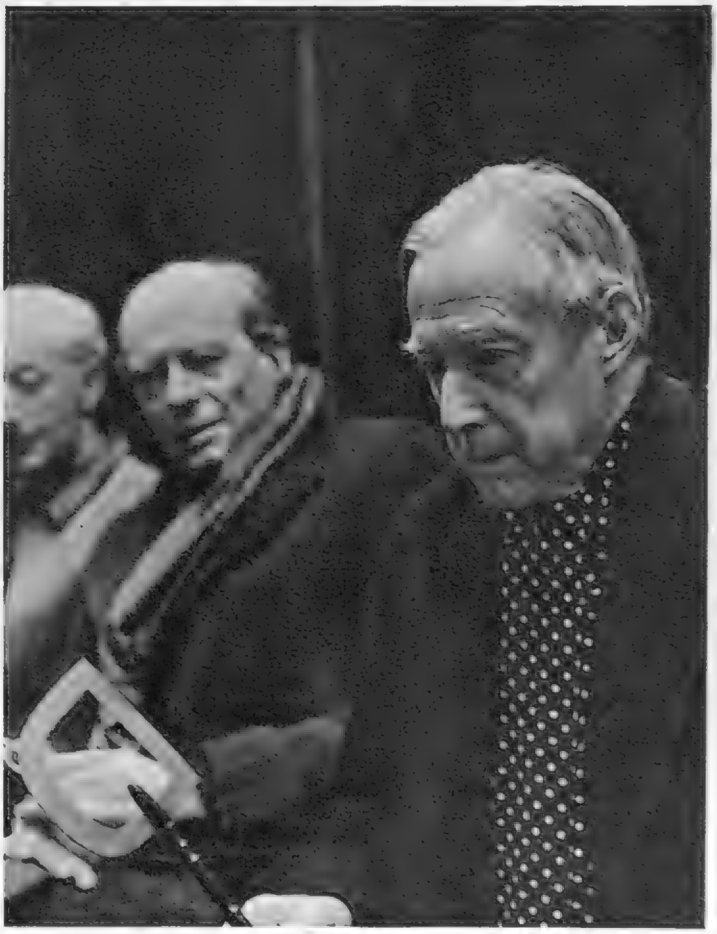
Deep in critical concentration: MR. A. R. THOMSON, A.R.A. *(left), and* MR. J. BATEMAN, R.A., *focus their full attention on a picture.*

Two veteran members of the Selection Committee of the Royal Academy: MR. S. J. LAMORNA BIRCH, R.A., *and* MR. A. K. LAWRENCE, R.A.

MR. A. K. LAWRENCE, R.A., MR. T. C. DUGDALE, R.A., *and* MR. C. H. JAMES, A.R.A.

ART SELECTION BOARD.

THESE close-ups of members of the Royal Academy Selection Committee show them getting down to business, and considering some of the vast array of works submitted for exhibition at the R.A. Though their expressions indicate a high degree of concentration, they do not reveal any very violent reactions! The "D" mounted on a stick which the newly-elected President, Mr. A. J. Munnings, holds, is displayed as a sign to the assistants who bring in the pictures and sculpture and indicates that a particular work must be viewed again before its fate be decided.



Holding the "D for Doubtful" sign: MR. A. J. MUNNINGS, *new President of the R.A., indicates that a work is worthy of further consideration.*

AS SEEN BY THREE PHOTOGRAPHERS— H.R.H. PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

This informal, laughing portrait of Her Royal Highness was taken by Karsh of Ottawa.

Princess Elizabeth was at Winds…
took this photog…

A FOURTH view of H.R.H. PRINCESS ELIZABETH, as seen by …
Her Royal Highness comes of age on April 21—her eighteenth birth…
absence of the King, she does not come of age in the full legal sense …
Royal duties has been carefully arranged, and will be increased after …
troops with the King and Queen—a forerunner of visits and tours to …
under the National Service Act when she was sixteen, Princess Elizabe…
responsibilities as Heir Presumptive to the Throne is looked upon as …
official: "The Princess really became liable for national service of a v…
continue her studies in private, with special attention to subjects of pa…
and law, in which her tutor is Mr. C. H. K. Martin, Vice-Provost of …
pianist, and will conti…

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

when the Hon. M. W. Elphinstone
h in Kodachrome.

COMING-OF-AGE PHOTOGRAPHS PUBLISHED FOR HER EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY.

And this charming study is by Studio Lisa.

Beaton, is published on our front page, and there we point out that though
, and will be able to attend the Councils of State as a Counsellor in the
l she is twenty-one. The Princess's training in the performance of her
il 21. As a beginning she went recently on a two-day tour of invasion
erent parts of the country during the next year. Though she registered
will not enter any of the women's Services. Her preparation for future
ost important form of national service. In the words of a High Court
special kind at her birth." Nor will she attend a university, but will
ular interest and value to her. These include constitutional history
n; and advanced French and German. She is already an accomplished
to study music, too.

THE HON. MRS. WILLIAM PHILIP SIDNEY, *with her children,* ELIZABETH *and* CATHERINE, *by the River Girvan.*

"So that's where the bees live": ELIZABETH SIDNEY *investigates a hive in the garden of Bargenny House, Girvan, while her mother and baby sister watch.*

GENERAL ALEXANDER *pins the ribbon of the V.C. on the breast of* MAJOR W. P. SIDNEY, *Grenadier Guards, at a parade in Italy.*

WIFE OF A V.C.; DAUGHTER OF A V.C.—THE HON. MRS. W. P. SIDNEY AND HER CHILDREN.

THE HON. MRS. WILLIAM PHILIP SIDNEY is the only daughter of Field-Marshal Viscount Gort, V.C., Governor of Malta, and is the wife of Major William Philip Sidney, Grenadier Guards, who has been awarded the [*Continued opposite.*

ELIZABETH *gathering daffodils by the banks of the Girvan, while* MRS. SIDNEY *and* CATHERINE *watch: a perfect picture of springtime beauty.*

Continued.]
Victoria Cross for his superb courage and utter disregard of danger at a critical moment in the battle at Anzio beach-head. Defending a gully near Carroceto, Major Sidney personally led an attack with tommy-guns and hand-grenades, driving the enemy out of the gully, after he had been struck in the face with a hand-grenade and wounded in the thigh. His V.C. father-in-law, Viscount Gort, went specially to Italy from Malta to attend the parade at which General Sir Harold Alexander presented him with the ribbon of the V.C. Major Sidney is the only son of the Hon. William Sidney, brother and heir to Lord De L'Isle and Dudley. Mrs. Sidney, who was the Hon. Jacqueline Vereker, was married in 1940. She was a pre-war member of the A.T.S., for she joined the City of London Company in 1938. After her marriage she left the Service.

Bedtime story: ELIZABETH *puts her dolly to bed in its pram, while* MRS. SIDNEY *and* CATHERINE *watch.*

Important correspondence; MRS. SIDNEY *watches* ELIZABETH *making her mark on a letter to Daddy, who will understand the meaning.*

THE HON. MRS. W. P. SIDNEY, *with* ELIZABETH *and* CATHERINE, *at Bargenny House, Girvan, where they have been staying with friends.*

Three-year-old ELIZABETH *helps* MRS. SIDNEY *to push the "pram" containing* CATHERINE *across the daffodil fields.*

ALL EYES ON THE CHANCELLOR:

SIR JOHN ANDERSON IN THE COUNTRY.

APRIL 25 is the fateful day fixed for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to bring out his first Budget, and everyone wonders which way the cat will jump. The RT. HON. SIR JOHN ANDERSON, P.C., G.C.S.I., K.C.B., Chancellor of the Exchequer since last year, was born 1882, and educated at George Watson's College, Edinburgh, Edinburgh and Leipzig Universities (M.A.; B.Sc.). He entered the Colonial Office 1905; was Governor of Bengal 1932-37; Lord Privy Seal 1938-39; and has held many other important posts. In 1941 Sir John married Ava, daughter of the late Mr. J. E. C. Bodley, and widow of Mr. Ralph Wigram, C.M.G., and at their pleasant country house these photographs were taken.

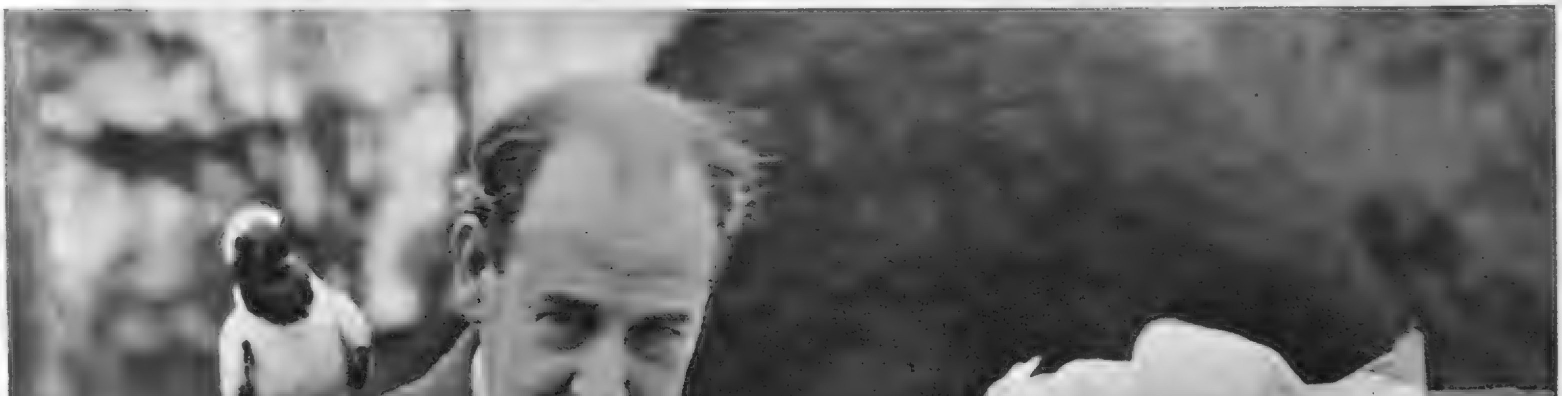
"Chancellor or no Chancellor, we're hungry and we're coming in." Sir John's pigeons help themselves.

He has some charming fan-tails, which are very tame and friendly.

Grain for the hens at his Sussex home.

Sir John glances at the morning papers before beginning work.

It is at this small desk in his country house that he does his best work trying to balance things up. The attaché case lies ready open.



The Chancellor is a pigeon-fancier, though he doesn't show. The birds look as if they meant to get their full ration.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"NIGHT THOUGHTS OF A COUNTRY LANDLADY" is a book on a familiar subject: evacuees in wartime. Miss Nightingale "was one of those cultivated and 'county' old ladies to be met with in most villages—supremely interested in local affairs, generous to the poor, stern to the evil-doer, pardoning to the penitent. She was a leading spirit in all local activities—Church Council, Conservative Association, Women's Institute, Girls' Friendly and Brownies. She also 'lived her own life,' as they say, for she did not consider herself altogether of the village. She had moved in wider circles. . . . She was not well-off, but she had never thought of taking in 'Paying Guests,' and only a European War could have driven her to such a revolution."

"Loose" Women. Such is Miss Nightingale; and she is, besides, shrewd, kindly and observant. And with her observation go the qualities of fantasy and unexpectedness peculiar to the author of "Without Knowing Mr. Walkley." Miss Edith Olivier does not have to strive for originality: it is implicit in her choice of things to remember, and in the way she remembers them. Women as a whole are less tolerant of human shortcomings than some men, but more tolerant than most men: Miss Nightingale, brought up in a world where behaviour was, in the main, uniform and dependable, suddenly found herself in close contact with people whose behaviour was utterly unaccountable; but she was not shocked or even surprised, except perhaps once, when the organiser of a weekly dance for soldiers said, "We haven't got nearly enough loose girls; we must import some." Miss Nightingale withdrew her protest on learning that the term "loose" had no moral significance; but the trouble was not over, for the girls, when they came, remained apart in a little swarm, buzzing "like the bees which they resembled in appearance," and Miss Nightingale was afraid that the two sections of her guests would never amalgamate. But they did—indeed, the whole book is a study in fusions, arranged often with difficulty and between unlikely people.

Contrasts. Miss Olivier has the gift for digression which often goes with a gift for phrase; the two faculties encourage each other. They are happily blended here, and are a valuable supplement to Miss Nightingale's experiences, which are not in themselves extraordinary, and, like a good anecdote, depend on the way they are told. We get glimpses of Holland during the Nazi invasion, of the evacuation of Dunkirk, and of the behaviour of the crew and passengers of a merchant ship sunk by enemy action. These, founded on the reports of eye-witnesses, make a poignant contrast to the essential peace (however disturbed by wartime innovations) of the village and the Wiltshire countryside. One may feel that Miss Nightingale—a fragment of whose diary this book purports to be—looks too resolutely on the bright side, an impression strengthened by the delightful illustrations, which are in Mr. Rex Whistler's most puckish and irresponsible vein. But Miss Olivier's mind takes things less lightly than her pen. When she says that the best gift she can offer to the stranger within her gates is a sense of isolation from the war, she is affirming her concern for the state of the world, not her indifference to it.

An Ambitious Schoolboy. "The Splendid Eli" is deliberately intended as a tonic and pick-me-up, and for the first few doses it fulfils its function admirably. Born in that comparatively halcyon year, 1880, Eli was the son of a farm labourer; but his temperament, no less than his abilities, quickly marked him out for success. At school he distinguished himself by answering all the questions that other boys couldn't, sometimes in such a way as to confuse the questioner. From the Government school he went to a Public School and then to a University—after which, as so often happens to promising scholars, his troubles began, for he had no influence to back him and a heavy load of debts. At this point, too, Mr. Hughes's touch on his story becomes less certain. Eli, the serious-minded but not priggish schoolboy, is an interesting creation, very far removed from realism, of course, but with a consistent relation to reality; and his ambition to get on in the world is most praiseworthy. In a discussion on snobbery a member of the staff tells him:

> There is some tendency in this age for many persons to forego the just assertion of real, not imagined, superiority on the ground that it is, as you said, hateful to their inferiors. Now, there can be no greater error, kindly though the motive. . . . I prophesy that unless the tendency . . . is checked, a time will come in England when all veneration for public figures will disappear, and there will emerge instead a condition of affairs when statesmen will have to wrestle for the last vestiges of public favour by the open abuse of each other.

Results of Success. Whether such a tendency was visible in the 'nineties I do not know, but certainly the youthful Eli took his mission of achieving greatness in a serious spirit, which makes the comedy that attended his efforts all the more entertaining, and his friends of that time, especially Mr. M'Wamba, the black poet, are real human beings as well as figures of fun. The line between comedy and farce is hard to draw, but comedy demands a certain dignity of deportment and intellectual responsibility which are out of place in farce; and as Eli's story proceeds Mr. Hughes shows an increasing tendency to lurch across the boundary. Eli's term as a schoolmaster in the school where the boys all did as they pleased has some very funny passages, as has also his association with the go-getting editor of the newspaper *Snaps*. But with Eli's growing success, both he and his story become more commonplace. I think Mr. Hughes might have done well to leave him as a Member of Parliament, instead of promoting him to still higher honours.

An Ugly Phrase. "Pommy Cow" is, or was at the turn of the century, Australian slang for Englishwoman. It is an ugly, cheapening phrase and conveys something of the beauty-mistrusting spirit that invented it to the whole of Miss Sarah Campion's story. "The Pommy Cow" is in two parts. The first records Mo Burdekin's service with his fellow "Bushies" in the Boer War, culminating in his being taken prisoner, wounded in an attempt to escape, and brought to recover in England, instead of his beloved Australia; while in the second part we see him repatriated, "fossicking" for gold and marrying, much against her will (for Kate was a passionate feminist and opposed to marriage), the English governess he had met in South Africa.

Mo, as readers of Miss Campion's earlier books may remember, is a likeable fellow, spirited and tough, but without any strongly-marked characteristics; and Kate is of the schoolmistress type, very sure of herself and her opinions, apt to be a little hard and scornful to the mere man. When their baby is on the way, and Mo has made money from gold-digging, she consents to regularise their relationship. The weather seems set fair, but Miss Campion has a surprise in store.

"The Pommy Cow" is very well written, in an admirably concise, hard style that never draws attention to itself; but it is not quite easy to say why it was written. The extremely arbitrary conclusion seems to take away the meaning from the book, cutting short development, curtailing pattern. The fighting in South Africa is described in masterly fashion, as are Mo Burdekin's experiences among the gold-diggers. The pictures are complete and evoke their period. Mo's relationship with Kate is adequately interesting, but no more. Other issues are discussed: the introduction of capitalism in the gold-fields, for instance, and the consequent disappearance of the individual prospector. But one looks in vain for a unifying design. Miss Campion hates war and despises gold: she devotes eloquent passages to denouncing them. She does not, it would appear, care very much for human beings—Daly Hamilton, killed in the war, is the one really attractive figure in the book. Against the others she seems to be always hardening her heart, and never more than in the last few pages. Yet the story has fire behind it and has not been written, I feel sure, to vindicate misanthropy, even though the author dislikes more deeply than she likes.

Why, How and Who. It would be hard to find a human being bound to his fellow-creatures by so few ties as was the victim in "Checkmate to Murder." This fact has its attendant complication: there appears to be only one possible motive for killing such a solitary individual. However, Mr. Lorac surmounts this difficulty with his usual skill. It is not so much a case of "Tell me why and I will tell you who," as of "Knowing why, the questions are how and who."

The author and the detective work on similar lines, neither sensational nor ostentatious, but absorbing and convincing. Inspector Macdonald says his method is "based on a reconstruction of possibilities." The possibilities hold our attention and do not unreasonably shock our sense of credulity. One meets interesting people—types, perhaps, but not stereotyped—some of whom linger in the mind after the last page is turned.

THE LONDON GALLERIES.

Paintings by Rodrigo Moynihan, A.R.A., Francisco Bores; Cecil Michaelis. *Redfern Gallery, 20, Cork Street, W.1.*

Water-colours by the late Walter Taylor; memorial show of works by the late Morland Lewis; new paintings by Cedric Morris. *Leicester Galleries, Leicester Square.* Till May 10.

Modern paintings, including J. D. Innes, Derwent Lees, Matthew Smith, etc. *Leger Gallery, 13, Old Bond Street.* April—May.

Paintings by Official War Artists. Canadian War Paintings. *National Gallery, Trafalgar Square.*

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Night Thoughts of a Country Landlady. By Edith Olivier. (*Batsford; 12s. 6d.*)

The Splendid Eli. By G. F. Hughes. (*Chapman and Hall; 9s. 6d.*)

The Pommy Cow. By Sarah Campion. (*Peter Davies; 9s. 6d.*)

Checkmate to Murder. By E. R. C. Lorac. (*Collins; 7s. 6d.*)

Pin-up Girl: No. 2. Elyse Knox.

ELYSE KNOX *is the second in our new series of Pin-up Girls. She's a blue-eyed American blonde; and has been voted official sweetheart by the air cadets at Victory Field, Texas; also sweetheart of the ground crew at the Air Forces Randolph Field, Texas; "Tent Girl" of the 92nd Evacuation Hospital, Rice, Cal., and hon. "Marinette" of the Marines at Parris Island, S.C. She's one of the most photographed girls in Hollywood, and has adorned countless magazine covers with her face and figure. She has made films under the Universal banner. Her latest are "Hiya, Sailor" and "Hit the Ice."*

ACCIDENTAL DEATH.*

By GEORGE BETTANY.

"JUST in case you don't know it," said the middle-aged sergeant of the Home Guard, with a sort of patient bitterness, "this weapon is known as the Sten gun. The magazine holds thirty-two rounds, and the calibre—but no, that's much too secret. Only me and two million others know that."

He paused to give the laughter time to subside. "You may laugh," he said, "but, let me tell you, this is a very dangerous weapon." He looked round the laughing faces disgustedly. "Dangerous, I mean, to N.C.O.s and officers!" he roared, but his voice was drowned in fresh gusts of laughter.

He regarded the platoon with every appearance of extreme dislike. "Lot of hyenas!" he snapped. "There isn't anything funny about it—not to N.C.O.s and officers, there isn't. Pay attention, you, Burton! I'm trying to teach you something, see?" He paused again, relieved to see that the smiles were giving place to more fitting expressions. "I wonder," he went on slowly, "how many of you here have narrowly escaped the murder of a comrade with this gun? *I* know of *six*, meself! 'Cause they nearly murdered *me*! Me, what's been like a father to you! Now, look! Next time one of you is given a Sten gun and is told to clear a hedge, remember to keep the gun pointing to your *front*! Some of you seem to think your front is the buckle of my belt! Some of you go sauntering up the hedge as if you were taking the dog for a walk; but we'll let that pass—for the moment. When you're clearing a hedge, with an officer and an N.C.O. walking five paces in rear, they're there to point out your mistakes, see? When they speak to you, *listen*, and do what they tell you, and do it *without turning round with your finger on the trigger and the gun pointing straight at an officer's stummick*! Try to remember it's a Sten gun you've got in your hands, not a garden hose. If you don't, there's going to be an accident one day, sure as my name's Smith, and somebody's going to get killed!"

He glanced round the faces of the sobered platoon, and young Burton, the pale-faced boy in the back row, glared back at him with frustrated hatred. Burton had scarcely listened, though his eyes had not left the Sergeant's face, for he hated Sergeant Smith with an intensity which left him shaking. Ted Burton, you see, was desperately, hopelessly, in love with Elsie, the Sergeant's pretty young wife.

Elsie was twenty-eight: a vivacious creature with jet-black hair that curled about her creamy cheeks, and eyes of a blue so vivid that young Burton felt dazzled when they met his own, as he felt when he looked into the face of the sun. Elsie was a woman of graceful curves and quick movements, and Ted Burton, milk roundsman, lived for the moments, twice daily, when he delivered the milk into her own two hands. He rarely spoke to her, save for the briefest replies, for her very presence numbed him, dried up the pretty speeches he had concocted before they could be uttered. It was Elsie who talked; young Ted would just stand staring at her mouth, with its curving lips, red as ripe cherries.

Perhaps, with unconscious cruelty, she led him on. Often, upon a wet or frosty morning, she would invite him into the warm kitchen for a cup of tea beside the fire, and while she talked, she studied him, noting his thin face and poor physique, encouraging his halting replies to her questions. As a man, Ted was negligible. Beside that tough old warrior who was her husband, Ted was but a weak stripling; but his pallor, his shabbiness, and his humility in her presence made her sorry for him, as she would have been for a hungry stray that had come to her door for shelter.

To Ted she represented everything which was desirably feminine. He knew his case to be a hopeless one; was well aware she was a contented wife and mother. He was resigned to that; but to her husband he was anything but resigned. Ted's consciousness, indeed, was sharply divided: half of him was concentrated into a steady, unswerving devotion to an ideal; the other half was concentrated in a primitive hatred of the man Elsie had married. Sergeant Smith possessed all the things which Ted had always wanted. He was strong, good-looking, efficient. He had the love and the admiration of Elsie herself, and Ted Burton wished him dead.

Although the Sergeant had stopped speaking, his last words kept repeating themselves in Ted's brain. "There's going to be an accident one day . . .. and somebody's going to get killed." An accident . . . somebody killed—but only by accident—and people weren't hanged for accidents. . . .

Automatically, Ted Burton fell in for roll-call, answering to his name. When the roll-call was over, the Sergeant uttered a final warning.

"Now, next Sunday morning you'll be doing Battlecraft," he said. "Remember what I told you about those Sten guns—they'll be loaded!"

Ted walked back to his lodgings that night obsessed by the idea which had come to him—an accident at Battlecraft. Here, as he saw it, was his chance; one which might never be repeated. It would appear an accident, of course, just such an accident as the Sergeant had warned them about, and Sergeant Smith would be the victim. If he, Ted Burton, couldn't possess Elsie, then nobody should! Not after next Sunday. Because Sergeant Smith would die that morning with half-a-dozen 9-millimetre bullets in his chest. Ted couldn't be hanged, because they would all think it had been an accident. After all, you couldn't train millions of men without having accidents: the papers were full of them. Look at the Air Force! Crashes every day. And nobody wanted to crash, did they? Nor did anyone want to kill a sergeant-instructor; that's what they'd say; that's what he himself would say. Besides, he was known to be careless and inattentive. Weren't the N.C.O.s always telling him to pay more attention? Only last Monday night one of the corporals had asked Ted his real age, and when Ted had told him he was eighteen, the corporal had laughed, and asked him if he didn't mean eight. Well, they wouldn't laugh on Sunday . . . and this was Thursday. Only two more days to wait. . . .

There was the usual scramble for the two buses that Sunday morning; the usual grouching and the usual muddle. The Stens, the rifles, the Northovers; the boxes of S.A.A. and Three-Sixes; the red flags and the ground-sheets, the sandbags and whatnot were all stowed in the leading bus at last by men who breathed heavily and swore in gasping undertones. Then, when all was completed, came the familiar voice of Staff-sergeant Smith: "All them stores out again! They've got to go in the other bus. Jump to it, now!" There was the usual good-natured grumbling as men of the Home Guard knocked their knees on the sharp corners of ammunition-boxes, or got careless fingers nipped between the folded steel legs of the Northover. But one face among them was smiling, as though at something unknown to his comrades—the face of Ted Burton, hugging his Sten gun to his shoulder.

In two hours, he was telling himself, the accident would have happened. He had worked it all out in his mind to the last detail. When he began to make his way up that hedge he would fire two single shots at the first dummy, as ordered; when he came within sight of the second dummy he would fire one shot, and then fumble with the cocking-handle so that Sergeant Smith and the officer behind him would think the gun had jammed. Actually, whilst fumbling with the cocking-handle Ted would press in the "A" button for automatic fire. The two behind would then give him exact instructions what to do: Ted would turn round, as if he had not heard clearly, and his finger would be on the trigger. One short burst . . . just a matter of two seconds, and the job would be done. . . .

When the stores were once more loaded Ted was among the first to scramble into his bus, making his way to a front seat. It was an uncomfortable one, because the legs of the Northover lay across the front of it, but mere discomfort counted for little with Ted Burton just then. Nothing, he told himself, could save Sergeant Smith now: the driver was already in his seat, awaiting the order to move off.

The raised voice of the hated Staff-sergeant broke in upon his thoughts: "Private Burton! Report to the Orderly Room right away!"

"Burton—Orderly Room!" shouted several voices from the back seats of the bus.

Puzzled, Ted looked round. Then, frowning, and still clutching his Sten, he pushed his way between the seats.

"Here, I'll take your gun," volunteered a corporal. "You won't want that in the Orderly Room." He seized the weapon before Ted grasped his intention, and two minutes later Sergeant Smith swung himself on to the bus and the vehicle began to move.

"Here, Sarge, what about young Burton?" asked the corporal. "I've got his gun."

"He won't need it. There's a copper waiting for him up in the Orderly Room."

"A copper?" echoed the corporal. "Blimy, what's he been up to, Sarge?"

"He got his call-up papers on Friday, and should have reported yesterday, so they've come to fetch him."

"Gosh!" said the corporal. "Poor old Army!"

"Far as I'm concerned," answered Staff-sergeant Smith, "they're welcome!"

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

LIVING VISITORS AT A GHOST INN: "THE HALF-WAY HOUSE."

To the Half-Way House in the Welsh mountains comes a group of people in search of peace: David Davies (ESMOND KNIGHT) *is greeted by the ghostly host, Rhys* (MERVYN JOHNS), *and his ghostly daughter, Gwyneth* (GLYNIS JOHNS).

Composer Davies, with six months to live, is unpleasantly affected by the embittered attitude to life of Captain Harry Meadows (TOM WALLS), *late the Merchant Navy, who has been wrongly branded a coward by his superiors.*

A séance at the inn is interrupted by the wireless. L. to r.: Oakley, black marketeer (ALFRED DRAYTON); *ex-convict Capt. Fortescue* (GUY MIDDLETON); *Alice Meadows* (FRANÇOISE ROSAY); *Sq.-Ldr. French* (RICHARD BIRD); *Jill French* (VALERIE WHITE); *David Davies.*

Their daughter (SALLY ANN HOWES) *brings about a reconciliation between Squadron-Leader and Mrs. French.*

Oakley, Captain Fortescue and Terence (PAT McGRATH), *an Irish diplomat who has no sympathy with the war, hear the German raider approaching the Half-Way House exactly as it had done twelve months previously.*

The visitors bid farewell to the ghostly host and hostess of Half-Way House after they had, unharmed, experienced the air raid which destroyed the inn twelve months previously.

MICHAEL BALCON produced "The Half-Way House" (Regal, Marble Arch), spooky story of a set of disgruntled people who singly find their way to and stay at a Welsh mountain inn which had been destroyed in an air raid the previous year. It is only when the B.B.C. nine o'clock news is turned on that they discover they have gone back a year in time, and on leaving the Half-Way House glance back to see a heap of bricks and a signboard aflap in the wind—all that is left of the inn.

"Go on, man! Say it!" cries exasperated Dr. Graham (O. B. CLARENCE) *as Richard Halton* (ROLAND CULVER) *tries to stammer his love to Maria Wislack* (BEE LILLIE).

Suspiciously Maria accepts George Duke of Bristol's (CLIVE BROOK) *statement that the Dundrannoch Arms are full up, so he and Richard must stay with her.*

NAUGHTY EDWARDIANS—FOUR-STAR "ON APPROVAL" FILM.

FREDERICK LONSDALE'S comedy of manners, "On Approval" (Leicester Square Theatre), with its rich Edwardian situations, is directed by Clive Brook who also stars, with Beatrice Lillie, Googie Withers and Roland Culver. The play was first produced at the Fortune in 1927, and revived at the Strand in 1933. Maria, who has arranged for Richard to stay in her Scottish home "on approval," also arranges that he shall spend each night on the mainland. But George Duke of Bristol thinks otherwise, and wires to the hotel to engage every room. So he and Richard must stay with Maria and Helen at the castle. The true character of each of the four is amplified under these close-up conditions, and the marriage partners reversed. Cecil Beaton designed the costumes.

Above: Rich, forty-one-year-old Maria explains to the American heiress Helen Hale (GOOGIE WITHERS) *that when she decides to marry she intends to put love to the acid test by having her future husband to live with her on a month's approval. In an Edwardian way Helen is pleasantly shocked as she gives her friend's corsets an extra tug to produce that wasp-waisted, hour-glass effect which was the fashionable shape of the time.*

The Scottish servants of Maria's Scottish home troop out, with morals outraged, when she turns up with two unattached men and one woman friend. Helen turns to as cook, to satisfy George's greed.

Charmingly, almost affectionately, Helen assures George that she is the one woman in the world who refuses to be the wife of the tenth Duke of Bristol.

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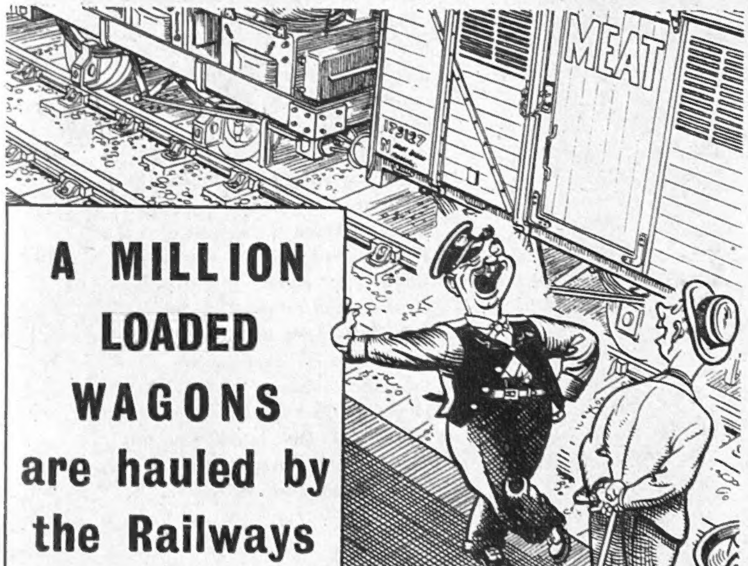

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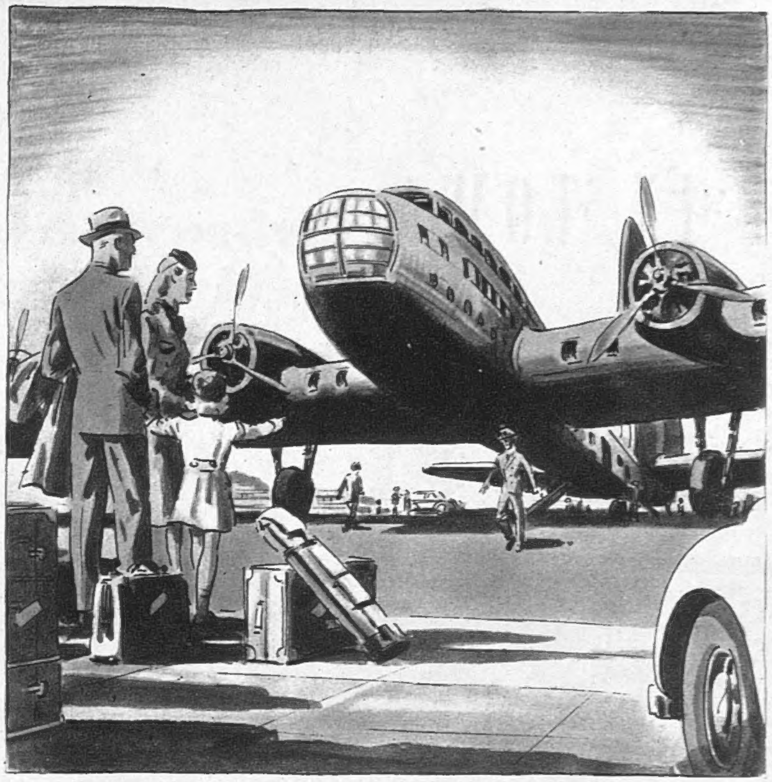

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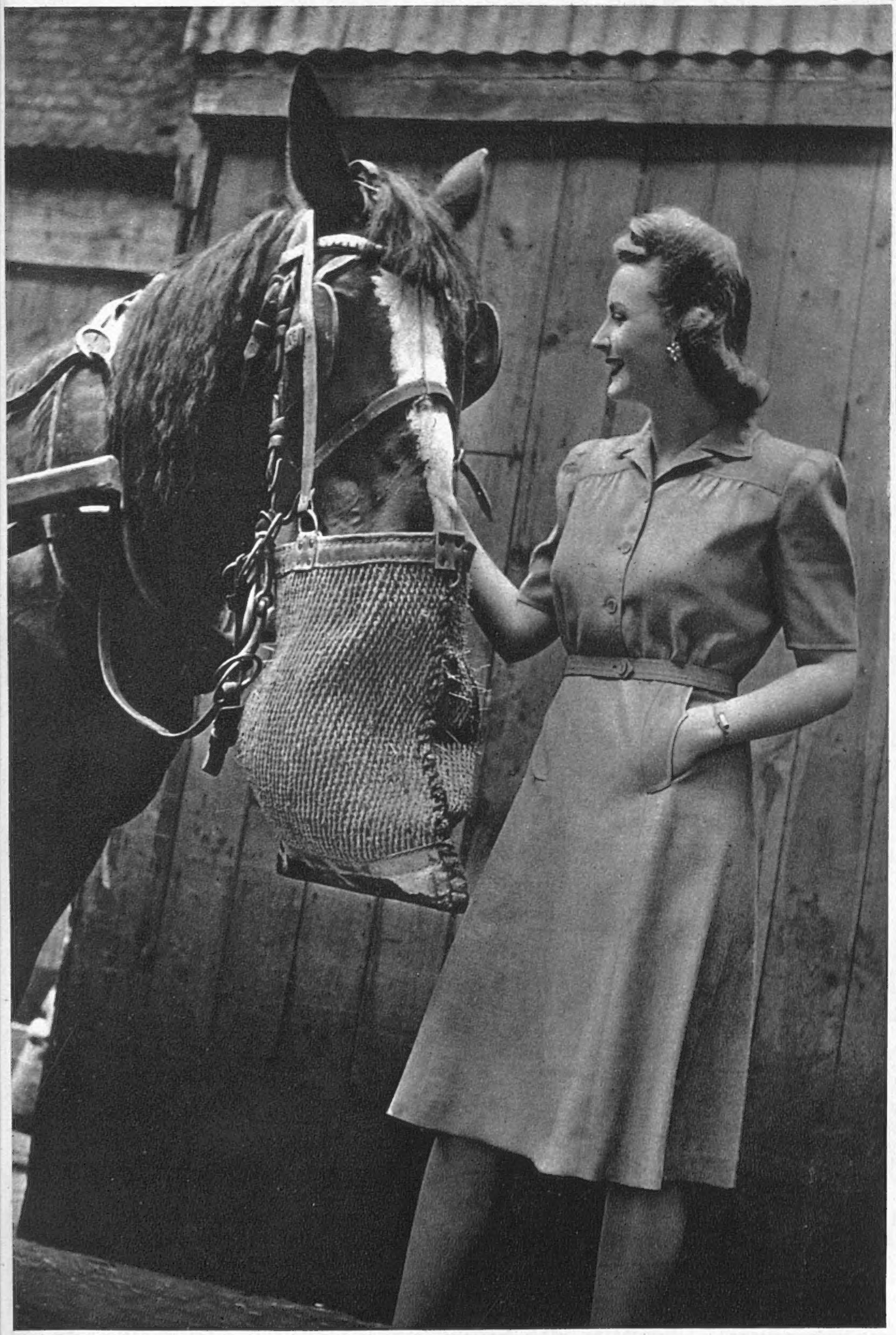

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